

Seattle Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 7th, 2016, 6:00–8:00 p.m.
City Hall - Boards and Commissions Room

Commissioners Present: Alejandra Gonza, Margaret Babayan, Danielle Wallace, Jason Poydras, Alex Becker, Amy Huang, Ashley Miller, Onya Robertson, Sarah Bishop, Marcel Baugh

Commissioners Absent: Julianna Tesfu, Edlira Kuka, Ken Nsimbi, Lara Diaconu

SOCR Staff Present: Marta Idowu

Welcome and Introductions

Call to Order: The meeting is called to order by Danielle

Public Comment: One member of the public gave comment

Approval of Minutes: The December meeting minutes will be approved at the February commission meeting

SOCR Report No report

Updates:

Administrative Updates:

Discussion of the Executive Committee Elections:

Sarah Bishop will be stepping down as co-chair. She nominated Marcel, Onya and Ashley to consider the position. Marcel expressed interest in the position with interim support from the current co-chair. Onya and Ashley declined the nomination. The vote on the third co-chair will be at the February meeting.

There was a suggestion that it is best for co-chairs to not also take on the role of the task force chair, but for other commissioners to take on that role.

New Commissioner Recruitment:

The press release recruiting commissioners went out. The recruitment committee decided on one applicant who would like to start in March. There have been about 14 additional applicants and the recruitment committee is planning interviews. The commission will also accept late applications if they come in.

There is a new commission liaison to the Mayor's office, named Amanda.

The commission is Interested in having interns. There was interest in organizing this by task force and writing an internship description. It would be great for supporting parts of the workplan. Commission interns will be an agenda item for the next meeting

Appeals Update:

Margaret and Jason did the December appeals.

Sarah O'Connor Chris is now the City Attorney representative that will work with the commission on appeals. She will be conducting the appeals training at the Saturday SHRC retreat.

The next appeals meeting will be on January 25th at 1pm in the Office of Civil Rights. Marcel and Onya both were potential volunteers for appeals.

Task Force Updates:

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ECOSOC) Taskforce:

Income based discrimination in housing stakeholder meeting: Danielle attended the first meeting and Sarah L attended the second. This stakeholder meeting is about housing discrimination based on income, such as public assistance and section 8 voucher recipients. The third meeting is Feb 2nd at 11am most likely, and it will be a discussion of potential legislation, Danielle will be attending but invited another commissioner to attend in her place if desired.

Danielle and Alex met with Catherine Lester and Mark Putnam on the State of Emergency on Homelessness. They spoke about the county strategic plan on addressing homelessness. The commissioners did not feel like all of their questions were answered, in particular the removals of unauthorized tent encampments and whether or not that was constitutional. They learned that SDOT, Parks and the City remove unauthorized tent encampments, and its possible that the city protocol is not being followed at all times, which would be a big human rights issue. It also can be difficult for people to find their belongings once they have been removed. ECOSOC will continue to watch and monitor this issue. The commission would like to look into information about who is doing the removals and believe that a public records request would give us that info.

Alex reported that the director of the Seattle King County Commission on Homelessness, Alison Eisinger, is interested in coming to speak at an upcoming commission meeting.

Another issue of concern is that there are a lot of shelters for families, but there are not sufficient shelters for unaccompanied minors, as they do not have access to parental permission, which is often required.

Civil and Political Rights Taskforce:

This taskforce is reorienting for 2016. The taskforce would like to focus on criminal justice reform and reducing discrimination in access to housing. The taskforce is interested in writing a letter of support for Fair Access to Housing campaign. Marcel has been reaching out to Columbia Legal Services to see how far along they are in that process and what the commission could do in support.

There will be a stakeholder committee that will be looking at legislation to Remove Barriers to Housing for People with Criminal Histories. Marcel will represent the commission on the stakeholder committee.

Bringing Human Rights Home Taskforce:

The Juvenile Justice legislation on a federal level that the SHRC supported didn't pass, but there is a desire to continue working on this in 2016.

The taskforce is concerned about a number of reported ICE raids in Central American immigrant communities. The task force is going to work on a statement and will keep the commission updated.

Agenda for SHRC Saturday Retreat:

The commission reviewed the retreat agenda and made small edits.

2016 Work Planning:

The commission broke into task forces and began discussion of the 2016 workplan.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05pm.

Next Commission Meeting: Thursday, Feb 4th, 2015, 6:00-8:00pm, Boards and Commissions Conference Room L-280.